

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

In the specification:

Please amend the following paragraph starting on page 1, line 4:

A. The present application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 09/905,397^{6,604,726}, filed July 13, 2001, by V. Kumar, entitled: "Proportional Solenoid-Controlled Fluid Valve Assembly Without Non-Magnetic Alignment Support Element" (hereinafter referred to as the '397 application), which is a continuation-in-part of co-pending U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 09/846,425, filed May 1, 2001, by V. Kumar, (hereinafter referred to as the '425 application), which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application, Serial No. 09/535,757, filed March 28, 2000, now U.S. Patent No. 6,224,033, issued May 1, 2001 (hereinafter referred to as the '033 Patent), which is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/988,369, filed December 10, 1997, now U.S. Patent No. 6,047,947 (hereinafter referred to as the '947 Patent), issued April 11, 2000, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 08/632,137, filed April 16, 1996, now U.S. Patent No. 5,785,298, issued July 28, 1998 (hereinafter referred to as the '298 Patent), each application being assigned to the assignee of the present application and the disclosures of which are incorporated herein.